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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O sovereign Lord, You alone are God. Thank You for another day to do Your bidding. Lord, You have given each of us the same number of hours and minutes to serve You and humankind. Teach us to seize each opportunity we have to live for Your glory. Deliver us from anxieties about yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Strengthen our lawmakers in their work. Give them understanding and courage to act on their convictions. When they are tempted to doubt, increase their faith. Guide their lives by Your unfolding providence, enabling them to use the gift of time to work so that peace will rule in our world.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

### THE BUDGET

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today not only will Congress pass a budget for the first time in 6 years, it will pass a balanced budget for the first time in recent memory. This is some-

thing many Americans have been waiting a long time to see. It is something they deserve, and it is just the latest example of a new Congress that is back to work—back to work on behalf of Americans who work hard and expect Washington to do the same.

No budget will ever be perfect, but this is a budget that sensibly addresses the concerns of many different Members. It reflects honest compromise from many different Members with many, many different priorities.

It includes additional resources and flexibility for national defense. It reduces spending, and it balances without raising taxes. That is especially impressive when one considers the type of budget the White House proposed—one that never balanced—ever—but still tried to raise taxes by nearly \$2 trillion.

That White House budget was so unserious that only a single Member of the President's party could be persuaded to publicly support it here in the Senate. Perhaps that is because it proposed to double down on the failed policies of the past: more overspending, more debt, more taxes, and hardly any reform.

So the White House fantasy budget may have made the left happy, but the new Congress believed the American people deserved better. We offered a budget that is more than just balanced; it is also oriented toward growth. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the budget we will approve today contains ideas that could boost jobs and grow our economy.

It would embrace the energy revolution and provide for more environmentally responsible innovation. It would repeal unfair taxes, such as those in ObamaCare, and set the table for more comprehensive reform of our outdated Tax Code.

Because this budget is about embracing the future, it also gives us the tools to leave ObamaCare's broken promises

and higher costs where they belong—in the past—in favor of a fresh start with the opportunity for real health reform.

This budget is also about protecting the vulnerable. It aims responsibly to improve and modernize programs such as Medicare, so they will continue to be there when Americans need them. After all, we know that failing to make commonsense improvements to save these types of programs today will mean allowing draconian cuts to fall on the vulnerable in the years to come.

The balanced budget before us went through the normal committee process. Members of both parties debated it vigorously on the floor. They offered more amendments than just about anyone can count, and then a conference committee met to work out the differences between the version of this balanced budget passed by the House and the one we passed here in the Senate. That is the way the process is supposed to work. That is the way Congress is supposed to function.

The budget reflects a lot of hard work from a lot of individuals. I would particularly like to thank Chairman MIKE ENZI and his counterpart in the House, Chairman TOM PRICE, as well as every member of the conference committee, for their tireless efforts to agree on a framework that can pass.

The balanced budget they produced won't solve every challenge, but it is a measure that will move us further down the path of positive reform. It is a budget that aims to make government more efficient, more effective, and more accountable to the middle class. And it is a reminder that the new Republican majority is getting Congress back to work for the American people.

### BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL TRADE PRIORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, once the budget is approved, we will continue our work on

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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